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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Information

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AND-24-41

April 25, 1941

Part I - ~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~

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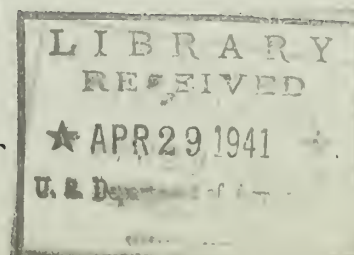
AGRICULTURE AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

SUMMARY OF FOREIGN DEVELOPMENTS: JAPAN: That the Japanese food problem is becoming more serious is evident by the additional items placed under ration, notably rice, in various parts of the country. Regulations have also been placed in effect controlling the distribution of fish and shellfish. Imports of grain are reported as being unusually heavy so far this year. In addition to purchases of around 750,000 metric tons of rice from French Indochina, large orders for rice have been placed in Thailand. Between 50 and 70 thousand metric tons of wheat have been bought in Australia. Reports also indicate that substantial orders for wheat have been placed in North America. Tobacco supplies are low due to increased domestic consumption and an almost complete cessation of imports.

UNITED KINGDOM: The British Cotton Control announced that raw cotton prices, which have been stabilized since April 1 at the level of official maximum prices quoted on March 31 by the Liverpool Cotton Exchange, will continue in force until July 31. The Control also announced that it would endeavor to give at least one month's notice of any change in price.

EGYPT: Negotiations for the purchase of the 1941 cotton crop by the British Government were suspended early in March. Indications are that the British will buy the crop provided the Egyptians agree to a substantial reduction in the 1942 acreage.

Several papers gave prominence to the possibility of utilizing American ships for the export of Egyptian products, especially to America and Australia. The opinion has been expressed by an official of the British Ministry of Finance that advantage should be taken of the fact that American ships, carrying American war material destined for British forces in Africa, would prefer to reload with Egyptian products, such as cotton and phosphates rather than return empty to the United States. It is also reported that this official has presented a study of his Ministry, setting forth his opinions on this subject and emphasizing the pressing need of Australia for Egyptian phosphates, as well as the great need of the United States, Australia, Japan and India for Egyptian cotton.



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Part II - FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE

AGRICULTURE AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

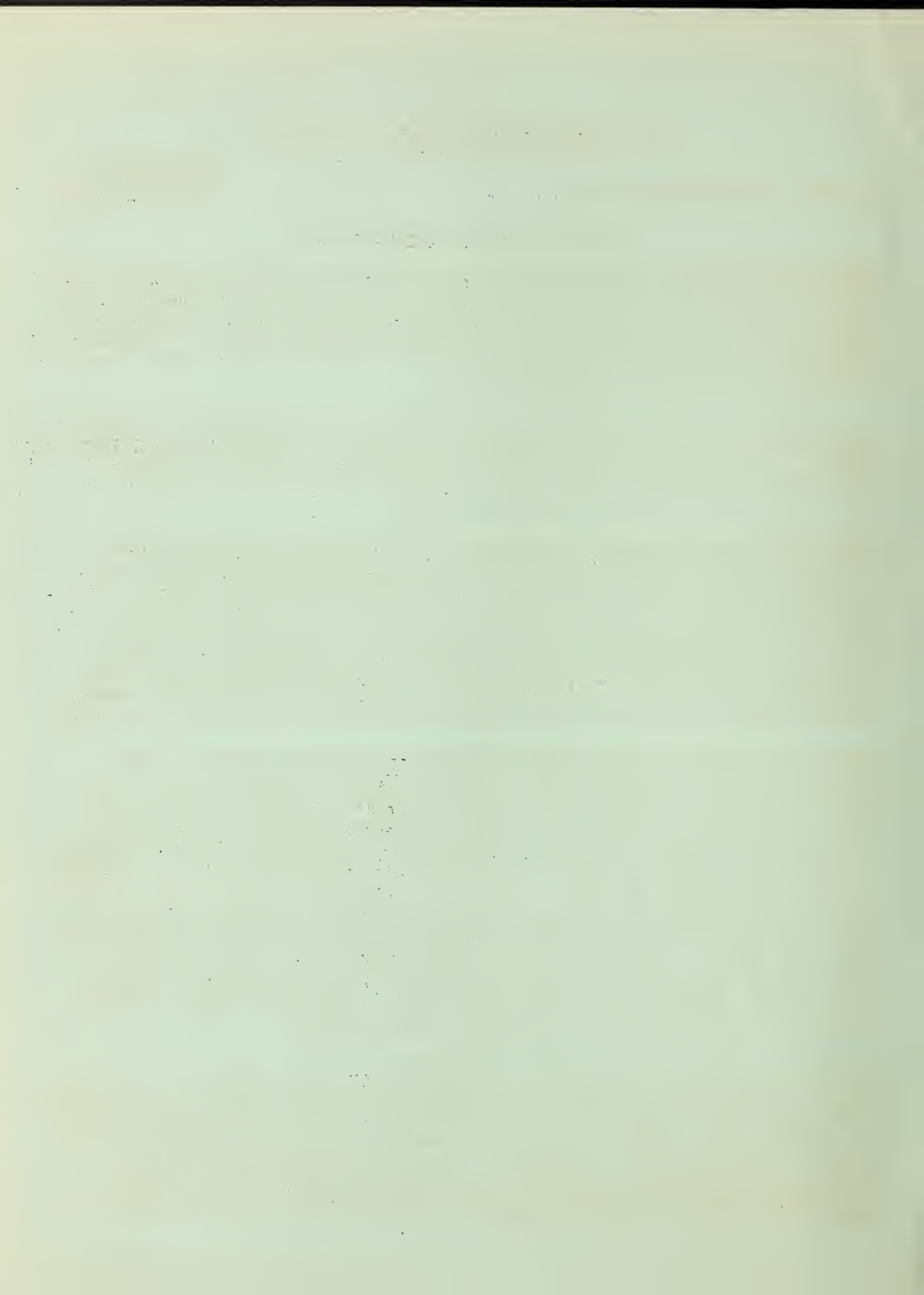
TRIPLE-A COMMITTEEMEN, OFFICIALS OF FARM ORGANIZATIONS, AND FIELD WORKERS in the State Extension Service in the Northeastern States met with representatives of the USDA in New York City Thursday and Friday of this week in the second of the regional conferences called by Secretary Wickard to discuss means of stepping up production of livestock products and some vegetables in this country to meet new defense needs under the Lend-Lease Act.

Secretary Wickard explained how the increased demand springing from the present emergency would affect the administration of the National Farm Program this year, and outlined plans to enable the farmers to convert this Nation's huge reserves of livestock feeds into more hogs, dairy and poultry products, and to grow larger tonnages of canning tomatoes.

CONSTRUCTION WORK HAS BEGUN on Washington's new \$2,000,000 military airport at the Beltsville Research Center, the War Department announced today. The new airfield will be part of the ring of air defenses around the capital. The Beltsville airfield will be used jointly by the 121st Observation Squadron of the District National Guard, for whom an armory and a training field with hangers will be constructed, and by the regular Army air corps charged with the defense of the capital. Plans call for a full-fledged military airport, with barracks for the men, and all necessary buildings and facilities. Ground is being cleared now for the three runways required for the National Guard Unit.

SOME 50,000 AMERICAN CAVALRY HORSES WILL have an excellent chance to dodge encephalomyelitis, commonly called sleeping sickness of horses, because of an immunizing process now being used by the Army which was originally developed in the Pathological Division of the Bureau of Animal Industry and described in a report just issued by Dr. J. R. Mohler, chief of the Bureau. The treatment, now used with a variation added by a scientist in private industry, has resulted in reducing the number of cases of the disease from 185,000 in the United States in 1938 to only 16,000 last year. In 1939, the number was even smaller, only 8,000 cases being reported. Ninety-six percent of the cases were reported from States west of the Mississippi River, where the Army has a number of cavalry posts. The Army is said to have about 40,000 horses now. It is expected this number will be raised to about 50,000 this year. The Bureau is also working on preventative vaccines for other diseases which have been taking a toll from livestock valuable for defense, including cattle and hogs.

FOR SEVERAL MONTHS THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE has been working closely with NDAC and War and Navy on acquisition of lands for defense projects and relocation of displaced farm families. So far 13 Forest Service areas and 6 Soil Conservation Service areas, totaling about 792,000 acres, have been transferred or made available for use during the emergency. The Forest Service has been requested to acquire 134,000 acres of privately-owned land, and has already optioned 77,000 acres; SCS has been asked to acquire 742,000 acres, and has optioned or started condemnation on about 230,000.



In relocation, FSA, BAE, and Extension have taken the lead with OLUC serving as a clearing house. In each case, as soon as the Department learns that displacement is to occur, the essential information is transmitted to the interested agencies, and, through them to representatives in the affected area. When necessary, local representatives confer in the field to develop a detailed program to aid orderly relocation.

To date these arrangements have worked reasonably well. Efforts are now being made to work out an agreement with the War Department for more expeditious handling of relocation work in the future.

THE WHOLE QUESTION OF INCREASING PRODUCTION of fats and oils in this country to meet new defense needs was discussed this week at a conference of representatives of the National Defense Commission, the AAA, and the paints and oils trade held in the Secretary's office.

To provide additional supplies of flaxseed oil, for use in paints needed in the defense construction program, representatives of the trade urged relaxation of the present AAA regulation classifying flax as soil depleting except when used as a nurse crop for perennials. They urged that annual plantings be classified as nondepleting as an encouragement to additional acreage.

Department experts pointed out, however, that the planting season was already too far advanced for any important change in farmers' plans to be accomplished this year, with the possible exception of North Dakota, Montana, and Northern Minnesota.

